

Syllable vs. word and centre vs. periphery in the diachrony of Romance syllable typology

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[D]ie Aufgabe [der historischen Phonetik] besteht [darin], mit Hilfe phonetischer Kenntnisse den Weg nachzuzeichnen, von dessen Zurücklegung im Bewußtsein der Sprechenden keine Spur bleibt, der aber ganz bestimmt zurückgelegt worden ist.¹ (Richter 1919, 369)

- (1) There are languages lacking syllables with initial vowels and/or syllables with final consonants, but there are no languages devoid of syllables with initial consonants or of syllables with final vowels. (Jakobson 1962, 526)
- (2) “core syllable types” (Clements & Keyser 1983, 28):
 - a. CV
 - b. V
 - c. CVC
 - d. VC
- (3) As regards diachrony, Latin represents a stage in a movement that starts in Proto-Italic and ends in Proto-Romance (or, in some respects and some language, even later) and that leads to a simplification of syllable structure in all of its constituents. (Lehmann 2005, 17s.)
- (4)

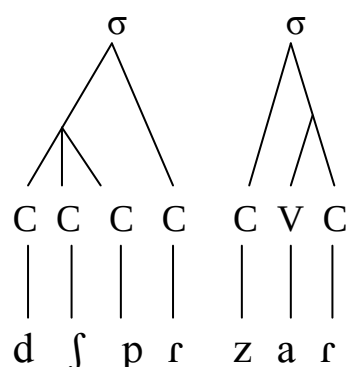
C _i C _j	>	C _j C _j	>	C _j	
Lat.				Mod. Sp.	
ipse	>	isse	>	ese	(Bybee 2001, 208)
- (5) Sp. *entonces* [entonses] > [entonseh] > [entonse] (Bybee 2001, 209)
- (6) Lat. ABSTRACTIONE(M) > Rum. *abstracție* (var. *abstracțiune*), It. *astrazione*, Fr. *abstraction*, Sp. *abstracción*, Cat. *abstracció*, Pg. (EP) *abstracção* (BP: *abstracção*)
- (7a) It. *astrazione* /a.strat.¹tsjo.ne/ V.CCCVC.C_{AFFR}GV.CV
- (7b) Fr. *abstraction* /ap.strak.¹sjɔ̃/ VC.CCCVC.CGVC_{NAS}
- (7c) Sp. *abstracción* /abs.trak.¹θjon/² VCC.CCVC.CGVC
- (8) **Core-grammar** is that part of the relatively stable (steady) state of the language faculty (i.e. of the adult I-language) that results from the setting of parameters in UG (the initial state of the language faculty, S₀) [, a]s opposed to the periphery, which consists of additional, marked, language-specific rules and exceptions. (*Glottopedia*; Chomsky 1986, 147-149, 221)

¹ ,The task of historical phonetics consists of reconstructing – with the help of phonetic knowledge – the path that has left no trace in the speakers’ conscience despite having no doubt been taken.’

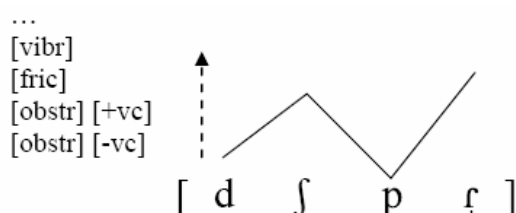
² Commonly realized as [aβs.traj.¹θjon].

- (9) [E]ach actual "language" will incorporate a **periphery of borrowings, historical residues, inventions**, and so on, which we can hardly expect to – and indeed would not want to – incorporate within a principled theory of UG. For such reasons as these, it is reasonable to suppose that UG determines a set of core grammars and that what is actually represented in the mind of an individual even under the idealization to a homogeneous speech community would be a *core grammar* with a *periphery of marked elements and constructions*. Viewed against the reality of what a particular person may have inside his head, core grammar is an idealization. (Chomsky 1981, 7s.; emphasis added)
- (10) [T]he proportion of variable phenomena increases the closer one approaches the 'periphery' of the grammar, hence: **syntax < morphology < phonology < phonetics** [...], although the more peripheral language components are, of course, never entirely variable. (Hinskens 1998, 160; emphasis added)
- (11) 1) the central area of a language system incorporates a core of universal or near-universal (as for frequency) principles and regularities as well as further conditions (or constraints) defining grammatical features of that specific language (which it may or may not share with some other languages);
2) a periphrastic area characterized by additional structural features and rules which are part of the system as a whole but often constitute contrary tendencies, irregularities or rule exceptions.
- (12) CCCV → (CCV (CVC (CV) V, VC) VCC) ← VCCC
- (13) [B]orrowed sound changes will usually be embedded in specific loaned items or morphemes. Initially a sound change thus borrowed will probably entrench itself for a while in the borrowing dialect in the loan words, before starting to spread in a lexically diffuse fashion. (Hinskens 1998, 183s.)
- (14) [T]here is nothing intrinsically difficult about the production or perception of VVVV [e.g. a suffix *-kaaei*] in Gilbertese or CCCCC [e.g. the finite verb *gvprckvnis*] in Georgian, and there is no evidence that these tautosyllabic sequences are in any way unstable. Rather, the rarity of such systems appears to be the result of the uncommon convergence of significant rules of consonant or vowel loss resulting in long V and C clusters respectively; prosodic systems in which stress-timing, and not syllable-timing, prevails; and unambiguous rules of syllabification. (Blevins 2004, 214)
- (15) Degrees of syllabic complexity (e.g. French)
- Onset: CCCVCC (*sprint*) > CCCVC (***strep.to.coccie***) > CCCV (***sphra.gis.tique***) > CCGV (*droit* [drwa]) > CCV (*très* [trɛ]) > CGV (*Dieu* [djø]) > CV (*la*)
- Coda : CV_{NAS}CCC (*monstre*) > CVCCC (***astre, terrestre***) > CV_{NAS}CC (*montre, comble*) > CVCC_{COMPL} (*hargne* [arɲ]) > CVCC (*garde*) > CVC (*bonne*)

- (16) Complexity due to vowel deletion: ‚hyper-complex‘ syllables (EP *desprezar* [dʃpɾ.ˈzar])



- (17) Sonority sequencing challenged:



- (18) Syllable types resulting from Lento- vs. Allegro realizations

Syllable types	Allegro	Lento
simple	Sp. (Southern peninsula, <i>tierras bajas</i>), BP	EP, Standard Fr.
complex	EP, Standard Fr., Sp. (<i>tierras altas</i>) + central	Sp. (Southern peninsula, <i>tierras bajas</i>), BP + peripheric

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